



5TH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE g7+

Grand Altis Lisbon, Portugal

26 – 27 June 2019

**DRAFT WELCOME ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. FRANCIS KAIKAI
MINISTER OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND CHAIR OF G7+**

Your Excellency, Teresa Ribeiro,

Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal

Your Excellency, Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão,

Eminent Person of g7+, former President and Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste;

Ms Asako Okai, Assistant Secretary General and Assistant Administrator, UN

Honourable Members of Parliament;

Colleague Ministers and Representatives of g7+ Member Countries;

Excellencies, Ambassadors and Members of Diplomatic Corp

Development Partners;

Members of the Press;

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to be here in Lisbon and to warmly welcome you all to the 5th g7+ Ministerial meeting. This is significant for me as this is my first function as Chair of the Group of countries. Let me on behalf of my colleague g7+ Ministers and other delegates heartily thank the Government and People of Portugal and City Council of Lisbon, for offering the office space for our European Hub, which has afforded us the opportunity to hold our Ministerial meeting in this beautiful city of Lisbon. We are equally thankful for the warm welcome extended to the various delegations on our arrival in this historic city. Many thanks also to the General Secretary and staff of the g7+ Secretariat for a well organized meeting and excellent facilities.

I would also like to emphasise how appreciative we the g7+ are, fir the generous financial support of the successive Governments of Timor-Leste (one oif the founding members of g7+), in particular the visionary leadership of H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, our Eminent Person. In addition, the fact that the presence of All parliamentary benches of National Parliament of your country, here today, simbolises the strong commitment to the noble cause of g7+.

Eminent Person, Colleague Ministers, distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

Let me at this point recognize the presence of my colleague Ministers and other delegates from g7+ family for their contribution to the common goal of achieving Peace and stability. I am very pleased that what we conceived 9 years as a group of originally 7 countries has today become a consolidated group and a voice that influences the conversation on Peace, Statebuilding and development issues relating to countries affected by conflict and fragility. Through our advocacy and peer learning efforts globally, the g7+ has impacted

the discourse about fragility and influenced our development partners to take the context of conflict affected countries into consideration in their policies concerning our countries. We note here that indeed many of our partners have heeded and are making noticeable changes in the way they do business in countries in fragile situaion. These efforts are recognized and applauded and we ask that our partners continue to do so.

Excellencies ladies and Gentlemen, it is estimated that more than half of the 836 million extremely poor people today live in fragile contexts. This proportion is projected to rise to 80% by 2030, the timeline set to deliver on the global aspiration of wiping off the extreme poverty. Considering the increasing cost of addressing the consequences of crisis, the only way to falsify this daunting estimate is to address conflict and fragility. In other words, the success of agenda 2030 depends achieving stability in conflict affected countries. Therefore we have SDG16, which strives to ensure that no one is 'left behind' as an important pillar to the global prosperity. In order to make this work, we need to focus our efforts on addressing fragility and tackling the root causes of crises.

In the g7+ countries and elsewhere, home grown solutions that involve the whole of society to promote dialogue and reconciliation efforts must be supported and promoted. We also need to maintain peace in our countries. Sustaining peace however requires capable institutions that bridge the gap between people and states. Our responsibility as Leaders is to build institutions that preserve peace and deliver services to citizens. We need to work with our

development partners to maximize the benefits of our natural and human resources to improve the lives of citizens.

Distinguished delegates, this is why the g7+ remains the forum where we can consolidate our voices to influence the global development agenda in the best interest of our poverty stricken populations. And this is why through this collaboration; we are organizing globally in order to improve lives locally, for our people. Yes this is why we are striving for an observer status at the United Nations so that our collective voice as group can be amplified at that level. For this, we require all your support. We know we can do this. We did when through the collective effort of the g7+ and our partners; we were able to establish the New Deal and latter secure goal 16 in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). And we continue this active collaboration in their implementation as it is in our best interest to implement the SDGs and make them work for us by aligning them to the New Deal and respective national development plans.

Excellencies, I hope that our discussions over the next two days will be open, frank and focused on addressing our challenges and finding ways of tackling them. I know we will always find similarities in circumstances which should help us to find joint solutions. Let us use this Ministerial meeting to close our ranks, look inwards as well as outwards, and bring forth ideas that will make us relevant to the current realities.

Let me conclude by re-emphasising that the future of sustainable development hinges on Peace and stability in conflict affected countries. It depends on how well the international community engages with countries in fragile situation.

Our countries continue to experience periodic internal conflicts and it is very important that we take urgent actions to stop the tragedy of war and conflict. As we all know, building schools and hospitals is a waste of money if they will later be destroyed by combatants – there is an urgent need to ensure peace and stability in order to attain sustainable development and meet socio-economic needs. Peace can be built only through action, and not with passivity. And if lasting improvements are to be made, a renewed commitment on preventive action is necessary.

We need to develop correct narrative to understand, anticipate and respond better to fragility. While global awareness of fragility is expanding, there are still real knowledge gaps about how it is distributed and experienced. Not enough is known about informal networks, institutions and economies that shape day-to-day realities. Without improvements in diagnosing fragility, a cure will remain elusive.

Let me assure you that the g7+ will build on its success in shaping global policy thinking on conflict and fragility by more actively engaging with policy and practice communities that are shaping the Peacebuilding, Sustaining Peace, prevention and Statebuilding agenda.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!